

**PRICE \$25 PER MONTH**


**PRICE \$25 PER MONTH**



**GOVERNMENT BILLS.**  
**TENDERS FOR SP. P. MEXICAN DOL-**  
**LARS.** Current in the Colony, weighing  
 17.1, in exchange for STERLING BILLS  
 drawn at 10 days' sight on the LORIS COM-  
 MISSIONERS OF HER MAJESTY'S TREASURY,  
 LONDON, will be received by the Chief  
 Cashmaster, Army Pay Department, until  
 12 Noon, To-MO-RROW, WEDNESDAY, 1st  
 February, 1888.

The Tenders to state the Total Amount Re-  
 quired (IN POUNDS STERLING) and the  
 amount for which each Bill should be drawn,  
 but no Bills will be issued for sums less than

overs, addressed to The Chief Paymaster,  
Army Pay Department, endorsed "Orders for  
Government Bills."  
The right to accept or reject any or all of the  
Tenders is reserved.  
W. HUGHES, Colonel,  
Chief Paymaster,  
China.  
Her Majesty's Treasury Office,  
Queen's Road,  
Hongkong, 30th January, 1888. 1252



**SANITARY NOTIFICATION.**  
SMALL POX.

THE SANITARY BOARD desires to inform the  
public the necessity for the purposes of  
disinfection, of keeping all bed-clothes and  
linens covered with a disinfectant from

minutes before allowing such articles to go to the wash.

By Order,

WM. EDWARD CROW,  
Honorary Secretary to  
Sanitary Board.

Hongkong, 27th January, 1888.

THE NORTH CHINA INSURANCE  
COMPANY, LIMITED.

SCRIP LOST.

**S** SHARE in this Company No. 3396 Registered at the Head Office in the name of BAUK WAN TONG has been declared to be LOST. This is to give notice that unless the said Certificate be presented at the Office of the Company on or before the 16th February, 1888, a New Certificate will be issued in lieu thereof.

By Order of the Court of Directors,  
ALEX. ROSS,  
Secretary.

INDO-CHINA STEAM NAVIGATION  
COMPANY, LIMITED.  
FROM CALCUTTA, PENANG, AND  
SINGAPORE  
THE Company's Steamship  
"WINGSANG,"  
having arrived from the above ports Consignee  
of Cargo are hereby requested to send in their  
Bills of Lading to the Undersigned for countersi-  
gnature and to take immediate delivery of the  
goods from afloat.  
Cargo impeding the discharge will be at once  
landed and stored at Consignee's risk and ex-  
pense.  
JARDINE, MATTHEW & Co.,  
General Managers.

NAVIGAZIONE GENERALE ITALIANA  
(FLORIO and RUBATTINO United Companies)  
NOTICE TO CONSIGNEES!  
FROM BOMBAY, COLOMBO, AND  
SINGAPORE.  
**T**HE Steamship  
"STURA"  
having arrived from the above Ports, Consign-  
ees of Cargo are hereby informed that their Goods  
are on board.

This vessel brings on Cargo—From M  
sailes, Goods, &c. ex S. S. *Régulo Rubatti*  
Consignees wishing to receive their Goods  
the Wharf are at liberty to do so.

No Claims will be admitted after the Go  
have left the Godowns, and all claims must  
sent in to the Undersigned before the 1<sup>st</sup>  
February, at 4 P.M., or they will not be  
cognized.

No Fire Insurance has been effected, and  
Goods remaining in the Godowns after that

the rate of one cent per package.  
CARLOWITZ & Co  
Agents,  
Hongkong, 30th January, 1888.  
DOUGLAS STEAMSHIP COMPANY  
LIMITED  
FOR SWATOW, AMOY, AND  
TAIWANFOO.  
THE Company's Steamship  
"THALES,"  
Captain Hunter, will be despatched for

at DAYLIGHT.  
For Freight or Passage, apply to  
**DOUGLAS LAPELAK & Co.**  
General Managers.  
Hongkong, 30th January, 1888.  
**FOR SHANGHAI.**  
**T**HE Steamship  
"NINGPO."  
Captain F. Schulz, will be despatched for  
above Port TO-MORROW, the 1st February  
at FOUR P.M.  
Passage apply to

Hongkong, 31st January, 1888.  
**FOR NAGASAKI**  
 The Nippon Yusen Kaisha's steamship  
**"FUSHIMI MARU."**  
 Captain Thompson, will be despatched to  
 above Port taking cargoes on through  
 of landing to Kobe and YOKOHAMA on or  
 the 6th February.  
 For Freight apply to the undersigned.  
 For the Master **Y. FUKUHARA**

Hongkong, 30th January, 1888.  
AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN LLOYD  
STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY  
STEAM FOR SINGAPORE, PENANG,  
COLOMBO, BOMBAY, ADEN, SU-  
PORT SAID, BRINDISI & TRIESTE  
(Taking Cargo at through rates to CALCUTTA,  
MADRAS, PERSIAN GULF, BLACK SEA,  
LEVANT & ADRATIC PORTS).  
THE Company's Steamer  
"AMPHITRITE"

For Further Particulars regarding Freight and Passage, apply to the Agency of the Company, Praya Central.

**O. BACHRACE**  
Agent.

Hongkong, 30th January, 1888.

**J. JOSEPH GILLOT**  
**STEEL & CO. P.B.N.S.**

**GOLD MEDAL**

Sold by all  
Stationers and Dealers.











## SHIPPING IN JAPANESE WATERS

100



# MAIL SUPPLEMENT TO THE HONGKONG DAILY PRESS.

HONGKONG, TUESDAY, JANUARY 31st, 1883.

## THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE HONGKONG POST OFFICE.

The most important question dealt with in the report of the Postmaster-General for 1882 is the need of more space for the work of the Post Office and for an increased staff to do that work. Mr. Lister, who has for twelve years, while the work of the Post Office has nearly doubled—the amount of correspondence passing through it having quite doubled—the staff is so little larger, that the total salaries paid in 1882 amount to only \$22,740 against \$20,400 in 1875. The pressure of the work has undoubtedly become much greater, the more frequent arrivals of mails and the more frequent despatch of coasting steamers. This institution of the Parcel Post has added considerably to the work of the Department, and the money order branch has undergone very great extension. Yet in spite of the growth of the work no addition has been made to the English staff, badly as it is needed. The accommodation at the Post Office is also undoubtedly too limited; when the building was erected it was sufficient for the requirements, but the designers had not sufficient prescience to foresee the immense development in the trade of the port and the enormous increase that would *pari passu* take place in the Postal business. Whether the addition of another story to the existing structure would meet the case, or whether a new building will be required, we are not in a position to say, but it seems tolerably clear that among the public works needed in the not distant future a new Post Office or enlargement of the present one may safely be ranked.

Beyond the provision of increased house accommodation, however, there is the still more important one of a practical re-organization of the Hongkong Office. For some time past there has been a feeling of dissatisfaction with this Post Office, a feeling that has gradually been growing, and taking a more definite shape as the city has spread its bounds, and the inefficiency of the arrangements that answered all-purposes a decade ago has become increasingly apparent. In saying this we do not impute the slightest blame to the Postmaster-General or his staff. They have struggled gallantly under difficulties for many years, and great credit is due to them for the excellent results achieved under such manifold disadvantages. No one sees more clearly than Mr. Lister that the service is inadequate to the requirements of the times and the necessities of the Colony. In his report he refers to this matter at considerable length and points out the directions in which he considers the local Post Office should be developed. These are:—(a)—The improvement of local delivery. (b)—The collection of correspondence from steamers, and a quicker landing of contract mails, by means of a steam-launch belonging to the department. (c)—An enforcement of the monopoly of the Post Office with regard to outward correspondence, more particularly Chinese. There can be no question as to the desirability of the first proposition. The local delivery is very slow and inadequate, letters being usually delivered at the office in town, unless a wish for delivery at private residences be expressed. The result is that private correspondence is often delayed and the ladies especially have to pass their souls in patience until their letters are sent up from the office. There is no delivery at all at the Peak, where the community is yearly growing, nor at Kowloon, where the residents are increasing in number and where large steamers are now always lying alongside the wharves. There should be one or two deliveries daily both at the Peak and at Kowloon, and pillar boxes should be established at Victoria Park and near the landing place at Tsai Tsai-tai. These pillar boxes would be a great immediate convenience, and others might with advantage be erected subsequently in outlying districts where the growth of population necessitated it.

The second suggestion by the Postmaster-General would, like the first, involve some increased outlay. A steam-launch would have to be purchased, and provision made for its upkeep. The gig at present maintained by the Post Office could, however, be dispensed with, which would go to reduce the cost of the upkeep of the steam-launch. This is certainly required. The contract mails are now landed without any unreasonable delay, but nevertheless some time would be saved if the Post Office did its own work. The launch is, however, most required for the collection of letters from other steamers, where there is often a notable loss of time. With regard to the enforcement of the monopoly of the Post Office over outward correspondence, this is a question of revenue with which the Government are more immediately concerned than the public. Probably Mr. Lister, in his capacity of Colonial Treasurer, has his eye on the best way of meeting the cost of development of the Postal Service with the least pressure on the taxpayer. Naturally he would, as Postmaster, like to see his department paying its own expenses; equally, as Treasurer, he would prefer that the increased cost of the Postal Administration should not have to be provided for by the Colonial Treasury, which has already so many demands on it. No systematic attempt has yet been made to compel Chinese correspondence to be sent through the Post Office. There is a very efficient outside system of delivery of Chinese letters, and any interference with this system would probably cause some trouble and feeling. Of course the Government would be within their rights in enforcing their monopoly, and the Chinese would in the end submit as we believe they did at Singapore, but it is a matter for consideration whether, having so long permitted this invasion of the Postal monopoly, the Government would be

wise in now enforcing it. Much of course depends upon the extent to which the Post Office suffers in revenue from the Chinese correspondence, and whether the pecuniary benefit would compensate for the trouble the enforcement of the monopoly would cause the Post Office and the irritation it would give rise to among the Chinese. However this question may be viewed, we have no doubt the community will feel satisfied that Mr. Lister has at least made out a good case in favour of a re-organization of the Postal arrangements, so as to admit of a more rapid delivery of letters, and increased postal facilities generally.

## THE REGISTRATION OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTS IN HONGKONG.

The remarks of the Hon. P. RYAN in opposition to the Bill for the Registration of Imports and Exports in the Legislative Council on Wednesday have doubtless taken the community generally as much by surprise as they did the Hon. A. P. MACLEWEN, the representative of the Chamber of Commerce. The Bill has been approved by the Chamber, in fact has been introduced on their recommendation. But some one has told Mr. RYAN that there are objections to it, and the hon. gentleman, carrying his well known liberality to extremes, asks for the postponement of the Bill on grounds which he is not prepared to state and evidently does not understand. All that Mr. RYAN could say in support of his position was that there were objections to the time within which cargo returns are to be made, five days, and to the penalties imposed for failure to comply with the law. No wonder Mr. RYAN was careful to inform the Council that he was not advancing so much his own opinion as the opinion of people who had spoken to him. The reasons given by the hon. gentleman are in fact too purely to be willingly followed by any intelligent individual. If five days is too short a time to allow for the sending in of the returns it can be lengthened when the Bill is in Committee to six or seven or even ten. If, however, the merchant who in Hongkong cannot make up returns of his consignments in five days were doing business in Shanghai, where goods have to pass the Customs, he would not require anything like that length of time. But in Hongkong we are told the documents may be here or there or anywhere, and returns cannot be made up, at least not in five days. If this is the fact it shows a very un-business-like way of doing things. But we do not believe that it is the fact, but rather that the hon. gentleman has allowed his credulity to be imposed upon. Mr. RYAN also says that the penalties are objected to as being too high. A fine of \$100 may be inflicted for making wilfully false returns. As no honourable merchant would wilfully make false returns we do not see that the point is of much importance. The penalty would of course not be inflicted for a mere error made without any intention to deceive. In Singapore, where there has always been compulsory registration of imports and exports, we do not recollect having seen a single case of contravention of the law reported in the local Press. It is, however, necessary to have a substantial penalty, to prevent the law being set openly at defiance.

The GOVERNOR, in reply to Mr. RYAN, made some remarks as to the advantages of such returns as the Bill under discussion is designed to secure. He pointed out that in every other civilized port of the world such returns exist, that the universality of the system showed that its utility must be appreciated, that returns would enable us to see whether the colony was progressing or retrograding, and to compare ourselves with other colonies, and what, perhaps the most important of all, that merchants would be enabled to follow the course of trade more closely. As an illustration of the value of statistics we may point to the present discussion on the position of the China trade. What would be the value of that discussion in the absence of statistics showing the amount exported from China from year to year, the total amount imported into England, and the relative shares of China, India, and other countries in the trade? Merchants would be conscious of a falling off in their trade, but in the absence of statistics they would be unable to demonstrate, as it has been demonstrated, how the China trade has been threatened with almost complete extinction unless measures be taken to preserve it, or to show so clearly as has been shown what those measures should be. In fact the value of statistics cannot fail to be appreciated by every reasoning being. Some years ago the Foochow Chamber of Commerce applied to the Hongkong Chamber for statistics of the tea shipped from Hongkong to Australia. The reply was that such statistics were unobtainable. Hongkong and Foochow are the ports of shipment for Australia, and it is important that statistics of the whole tea trade should be kept it must be important that statistics should be obtainable here. The registration of imports and exports would also facilitate the compilation of stock lists, the utility of which will be admitted by every one, but which it is practically impossible to compile in Hongkong under existing circumstances. Again, the importance of obtaining as correct returns as possible of the foreign trade of China is obvious, but the excellently compiled returns issued by the Foreign Customs are to some extent rendered unreliable by the great amount of transshiping which goes on in Hongkong and the absence of returns from that port. Against the numerous arguments to be advanced in favour of the Registration of Imports and Exports Bill the only one that can be opposed is the slight amount of work the making up of the returns would occasion in the office, mere copying out of the quantities given in the invoices or manifest, work which can be done by any junior clerk and which will occupy a very short time. This work and time will be much more than compensated for by the value of the returns in every merchant's office, altogether independently of their great public advantages. The Bill has passed its second reading, and there can be no doubt, we think, that it will safely pass through its remaining stages.

## THE HONGKONG GOVERNMENT AND THE SMALL-POX EPIDEMIC.

Much indignation has been expressed at the utterly inadequate nature of the arrangements made by the Government for coping with the present outbreak of small-pox. To locate a number of pest houses in a densely populated district was a measure which common sense alone was sufficient to condemn. To place the patients in these pest houses under the charge of a doctor having at the same time charge of a general hospital, and a number of patients in the general hospital had contracted the disease, and they had had to be transferred to small-pox hospital. We are glad to say that things are not quite so bad as this, thanks, we suppose, to the vigilance exercised by the Superintendent. The facts are that several have been admitted to the Hospital with symptoms of fever, but with no rash, which have turned out to be small-pox. Of course as soon as the rash has appeared they have been sent over to the small-pox hospital. There were two cases of this kind on the 22nd instant, which were placed in a ward the Superintendent has set apart for such doubtful cases. But anything more thoroughly despicable to the Medical Department or to the Government, or to whoever may be responsible, than the existing arrangements could hardly be conceived. And this is just the sort of thing that might be expected from paternal and irresponsible Government. We shall always be liable to similar mistakes until the responsible authorities say in the management of the case. We want a municipality with a sanitary committee. If such a body were in existence at the present time we venture to say measures would be promptly taken which would very considerably mitigate the epidemic. As showing the benefits attending the management of their own affairs by ratepayers we might cite an incident that occurred at Sheffield, where, as we mentioned yesterday, there is also an outbreak of small-pox and where increased hospital accommodation has become necessary. The Sanitary Committee met on the 11th December, when there was read a letter from the Local Government Board, stating that an inquiry with regard to the proposed new fever hospital had been proposed, and that the Local Government Board intended to hold on the 22nd instant. The committee, on the motion of the Mayor, passed a resolution expressing their extreme disappointment at the delay of the Local Government Board in holding the inquiry, and informing them that the necessity for the provision of additional accommodation for small-pox patients was so great that they were beginning to think of waiting in respect to the Board, they felt bound to proceed at once with the erection of the temporary buildings at the proposed small-pox hospital at Lodgepole. The committee thereupon accepted estimates for the erection of the hospital, which is expected, with the land, to cost £12,000. The Local Government Board, a department of the Imperial Government, proposed to let eleven days elapse before commencing the inquiry; the local authorities take the matter into their own hands and proceed at once. If we had a municipality in Hongkong we could in the same way remove the scandal of the small-pox hospital being where it is and attended as it is in its lot time probably than the Government will take to begin thinking about it. *Experiencia docet.* Will it be too much to hope that the painful experience through which the colony is now passing will lead to the adoption of well devised measures for grappling in the future with small-pox, which is more or less prevalent every year at this season. Not only ought there to be adequate arrangements to cope with the present epidemic character, but also arrangements to render such an outbreak impossible or to nip it in the bud. There are two means of meeting small-pox, one by vaccination and one by stringent isolation. We believe a law for the compulsory vaccination of all children born in the colony would be a most judicious measure. Some opposition there possibly might be, but there is no reason to suppose it would be of a character that could not be readily overcome. However, even if we were at the risk of some disturbance, we contend the time has come when it is the duty of the Government to set on foot the benefits of compulsory vaccination. Even if it takes years of the protection afforded by vaccination diminishes and ultimately ceases. As it is practically impossible to make vaccination compulsory, a community will always be liable to an outbreak of small-pox, notwithstanding a system of compulsory infant vaccination may be enforced. We have to turn then to the other means of meeting it, namely, isolation. On this point the anti-vaccinationists, and it is fair to give them credit for it, have most clearly demonstrated what can be accomplished by this means. Voluntarily depriving themselves, on grounds which appear absurd, of the protection afforded by vaccination, but fully recognising the necessity of safe guarding themselves against small-pox, have even been found to adopt stringent measures. When is the result? At Leicester, the headquarters of the anti-vaccinationists, where compulsory vaccination is practically a dead letter, small-pox is almost unknown. We have already mentioned the outbreak of small-pox at Sheffield. But that is not the only town in England where the disease has happily made its appearance in an aggregated form, for, as we believe, universally prevalent all over England. Yet we find Leicester, the home of anti-vaccination, the most successful in combating it. An outbreak there, attacking five persons in one family, was extinguished by removing all the sick persons to the hospital, and isolating and quarantining them. On this the *British Medical Journal* says:—"The lessons thus taught of the value of immediate and compulsory notification of cases of infectious diseases, when accompanied by the drastic measures of isolation and quarantine of those who had been in contact with them, are quite in accordance with the teachings of modern science. If a complete system of compulsory notification of infectious diseases, carefully watched, and accompanied with ample provision of infectious hospitals and isolation houses, existed throughout England, an immense saving of life would result. A jealous regard for individual liberties and interests has in the past interfered with any such complete sanitary system, which was that advocated by Sir James Simpson, and approved by a great body of enlightened sanitarians, as a means of stamping out small-pox as well as small-pox. Such a complete and universally applicable system would have a most valuable effect in reducing mortality, and would do so, moreover, at a cost, we think, that it will safely pass through its remaining stages, even in a mere financial sense."

The advantage the system of vaccination possesses over that of isolation is that it affords protection to the individual irrespective of his surroundings, whereas a member of the Leicester school if he had occasion to reside in Hongkong, where isolation is not enforced, would expose his family to any and every medical contingency whatever. Our medical contemporaries seem to us to be referring to the Leicester system—Vaccination and co-vaccination, as practised in Germany, have proved, however, to be so completely effectual in preventing epidemic increase of small-pox, and in arresting mortality from it, that no such costly and pre-arranged system is necessary in respect to that disease. It is especially in respect to contagious and miasmatic diseases of isolation and quarantine would afford the greatest saving of life." This argument, so far as small-pox is concerned, does not appear very sound, because if isolation were universally practised the disease would probably soon be confined to the number of verandahs which self the expense and inconvenience of isolation and quarantining one family, as in the instance mentioned, amount to less than would the expense and inconvenience of general compulsory vaccination. Isolation, however, is not universally adopted, nor will it be for ages to come, if ever, and therefore vaccination is necessary for the protection of the individual and the community. But in Hongkong, where vaccination is in fact non-existent, isolation ought to be strictly enforced. The defect of Public Health Bill contained a clause providing for the compulsory reporting of infectious diseases. A regulation has been made by the Governor in Council to the same effect, but it is in excess of the powers conferred by law and no conviction can be obtained against any person for failure to comply with it. But even supposing that all cases were duly reported there is no machinery for enforcing compulsory isolation. To wait for the passing of a new Public Health Bill would be a criminal waste of time and sacrifice of life. Under the severe provisions of the present epidemic, which is already almost a pestilence, it is the duty of the Government to take prompt measures to suppress the disease. The mortality statistics show that the rate of within a fraction of 10 per cent. per annum—the community has been reduced to such a state of docility that they would be prepared to submit to very drastic measures for the stamping out of the scourge and the prevention of its recurrence. The Government would do well, therefore, to suppress the disease, and to introduce legislation while the public mind is in a temper to receive it. Even if the law fell somewhat short of its intention and only a proportion of the cases were reported and isolated, still great good would be done. The same Bill would of course provide for the compulsory vaccination of infants. But the Government would be well to remember the small-pox hospitals from the centre of the town and secure the exclusive services of a doctor to attend on the patients and do nothing else.

## HONGKONG LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

A meeting of the Legislative Council was held on the 25th January. There were present:—  
His EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR, Sir WILLIAM DE VOGEL, K.C.M.G.  
Hon. J. RUSSELL, C.M.G., Acting Chief Justice.  
Hon. F. SWEET, Colonial Secretary.  
Hon. E. L. O'MALLEY, Attorney-General.  
Hon. A. LISTER, Colonial Treasurer.  
Hon. J. M. PARSONS, Surveyor-General.  
Hon. G. ROBERTSON, J.N., Harbour Master.  
Hon. P. RYAN.  
Hon. WONG SHING.  
Hon. A. P. MACLEWEN.  
Hon. J. BELL-LEVING.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS.  
Hon. H. G. THOMSON, R.N., and Hon. A. P. MACLEWEN, having been appointed permanent members of the Council, were sworn in by the Governor, and took the oath of office.

THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING were read and confirmed.

THE POST OFFICE REPORT.  
The report of the Postmaster-General for 1882 was laid on the table.

DISINFECTING OF CLOTHES AT THE GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS.  
Hon. A. P. MACLEWEN.—Sir, I beg to ask the following questions—What washing arrangement is made to keep the clothes of small-pox patients from contaminating the general public? Is there any system of disinfection of said clothes such as a disinfecting chamber?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY.—In reply to the hon. member I have to inform him that patients' clothes and bed-clothes are disinfected in a strong solution of carbolic acid and washed in the hospital's compounds if required again while the patients are in the hospital. Clothes belonging to patients are not sent out of the hospital, and while the patient is diseased are not allowed to go out of the hospital, but are destroyed when given him. When the patient recovers and is discharged from the hospital, his clothes are given him, and he is not permitted to return. Under this system there can be no risk of infection or contagion as regards the clothes of the general public.

THE DEFENCES SKETCHING PREVENTION ORDINANCE.  
The ATTORNEY-GENERAL.—I have to move the first reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance for the Prevention of Small-pox and other infectious diseases, 1883." The object of this Bill is to prevent the spread of small-pox and other infectious diseases, and to provide for the isolation and quarantine of patients. It is a measure of public health, and is necessary for the safety of the colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, seconded, and the Bill was read a first time.

THE PREVENTION OF ENCLOSURES OF VERANDAHS ORDINANCE.  
The ATTORNEY-GENERAL.—I have to move the second reading of a Bill entitled "An Ordinance for the Prevention of Enclosures of Verandahs, 1883." The object of this Bill is to prevent the enclosure of verandahs, and to provide for the removal of such enclosures. It is a measure of public health, and is necessary for the safety of the colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, seconded, and the Bill was read a second time.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL the Council went into Committee on the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, seconded, and the Bill was read a third time.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL the Council went into Committee on the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, seconded, and the Bill was read a fourth time.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL the Council went into Committee on the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY, seconded, and the Bill was read a fifth time.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL the Council went into Committee on the Bill.

The first clause. The amendment of the Surveyor-General, I think, requires consideration. It is now to be, and I should like to be satisfied on the one hand that it is necessary to have incombustible blinds, and on the other hand that there are not other blinds than bamboo blinds would satisfy that condition. Have you fully made up your mind Mr. Price—probably you are the person best acquainted with the subject—what are the only blinds which are safe?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL.—I think so.

His EXCELLENCY.—It is a serious matter to put such things in an Ordinance without being fully satisfied. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the subject to say how far bamboo blinds are incombustible or how far incombustible blinds are necessary in this case. Are these bamboo blinds used as partitions because this alteration brings them under that head?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL.—The main object is to have blinds that will roll up; there is then less likelihood of their carrying a conflagration from house to house.

His EXCELLENCY.—Are such blinds used as partitions?

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL.—Very frequently.

His EXCELLENCY.—I think I understand that the amendment is intended as a limitation to the forbidding of all kinds of partitions.

The clause of amendment was then passed.

With regard to the second clause, which deals with partitions, I have to say that I am not in favour of it. I have not heard sufficient about this matter, and I should like to hear more about the danger to be avoided by the Ordinance, and the reason of these exceedingly heavy penalties.

The SURVEYOR-GENERAL.—The frequent fires in Hongkong, Sir, are no doubt to some extent due to the number of verandahs which are enclosed. The Government have made repeated efforts to clear the verandahs, but immediately these objectionable partitions are taken down, the verandahs are again enclosed. It is possible to have inspectors continually looking after this. There is no difficulty in a legal difficulty. A document called the verandah guarantee is signed by the Crown lessee of the lot, and the section holders either build houses with verandahs, but the Government do not hold upon them as they have not signed any document, and the Government are not bound to enforce the law. It is possible to have inspectors continually looking after this. There is no difficulty in a legal difficulty. 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